

## Chapter 6

### **Enforcing the Participation of Civil Society in Local Decision Making: The Lessons from the South-East Europe Experience**

by

Haralambos Kondonis

*Local civil society and the private sector should work in synergy with local authorities for education, economic development, social cohesion, and local good governance. Only the local community's participation can make local development sustainable, enforce transparency and accountability and make information accessible to everybody, minimising the dangers of corruption. Corruption is a real possibility when decentralisation is under way and the powers of the local authorities are undergoing transformation; to guard against it calls for the prior establishment of transparent structures, civil education and training. Enforcing the active participation of civil society in decision making is a central element of a strategy to improve governance in a region and foster policy effectiveness. This strategy should aim to strengthen transparency and accountability, define better the responsibilities of each stakeholder, increase the capacity and the professionalism of local authority officials, and promote the core values of citizens' participation in local community affairs. Training programmes for local authorities should be mechanisms that encourage participation of the local community and specific social groups.*

## Introduction

Local and regional authorities are vital components of a sound democratic state structure. Building up the capacity of local and regional authorities is therefore necessary, through an institutional and fiscal decentralisation process<sup>1</sup>. However, decentralisation does not a priori mean greater democracy if it is not combined with capacity building, citizens' participation, transparency, effective services, and democratic elections.

The experience of several South-East European countries shows that decentralisation, if unprepared and without a consensus, can undermine state stability and local good governance. The task of the international community is to keep a balance by promoting a functional approach intended to improve the provision of services to the population with efficient use of the available resources. Transfer of problems from the central to the local level must be avoided, in order to allow democratic institutions to flourish in local communities with the active participation of civil society and the co-operation of central government.

International organisations have put emphasis on this dialogue. Bringing together ministries responsible for local self-government, local authorities and their associations and NGOs is a pre-condition for national policies or national work programmes on good local governance to be effective. It is a given that reforms of legislation are necessary, but it is also necessary that the implementation process be monitored by all the parties involved.

Moreover, strong local and regional authorities mean more effective and sustainable cross-border co-operation. Nowadays, in practical terms, cross-border co-operation that is initiated by local authorities is minimal and sporadic. Absent are substance and long-term planning, the participation of people and civil society, and visible results pertinent to citizens' everyday life.

Unfortunately, capacity building of local authorities and cross-border co-operation very often remain hostages to ethnic and political differences, generating significant delays in the democratisation, reconciliation and development process.

We can overcome those problems by strengthening transparency and accountability, defining responsibilities, increasing the capacity and the professionalism of local authority officials, and promoting the core values of citizens' participation in local community affairs. Citizens' participation in

this process is valuable and necessary. A shortfall in information and co-operation with the local civil society, social groups, such as women and youth, jeopardises good local governance. Responsibility lies in the hands of national and local governments to initiate programmes which focus on people who face discrimination and possible marginalisation. Non-governmental organisations and local agencies should be partners in projects that promote citizens' access, social cohesion, and equitable economic sustainable development.

## **Building a strategy and the challenge of implementation**

After the collapse of the authoritarian regimes in South-Eastern Europe (SEE), democratisation and institution building at central level were immediate priorities, combined with the creation of an environment promoting stability and economic development. It soon became evident that the democratisation process can only be sustainable if it is participatory, meaning the inclusion of the local authorities, unions, civil society, and representatives of the private sector. Fifteen years of transition in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe prove that the dilemma between state and regional stability versus decentralisation and building effective local authorities is a false one.

What is really dangerous, as it is in every aspect of social and economic life, is the transformation of competences without the appropriate preparations, *i.e.*, without long-term strategic planning, training, resources, and of course political consensus.

Up to the present, the European Union, and international organisations and international financial institutions, such as the Council of Europe, UNDP and the World Bank have underlined the role of local and regional authorities and assisted the SEE countries to form their strategies for fostering enhanced local democracy. But it should be pointed out that every SEE country has its own internal territorial pattern and its own history of local governance. Therefore, each of them must find out what particular model of local and regional self-government is most appropriate to its political structure. Similarly with the different local democracy models within the European Union, and given that there is no EU *acquis communautaire* on local governance, SEE countries should exchange experience without necessarily developing a common regional model. The latter could prove inflexible, ineffective and dangerous for their democratisation and consequently for the course of their European integration.

In addition to the traditional "local level", the "region" is increasingly becoming more important, functioning at a "state minus one" level. "Regions" are considered closer to the EU policy of creating "stronger institutions

Table 6.1. **Administrative organisation of SEE countries**

Country	Administrative organisation
Albania	12 prefectures/regions, 36 districts, 65 municipalities, 309 communes
Bosnia and Herzegovina	2 entities (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republic of Srpska), Autonomous district of Brcko; Federation divided into in 10 cantons; Republic of Srpska organised in 64 municipalities and 2 cities governed by special laws
Croatia	21 counties (including the city of Zagreb), 122 towns, 424 municipalities and 6 767 settlements
FYROM	123 municipalities (number planned to decrease)
Serbia and Montenegro	2 entities (Republic of Serbia and Republic of Montenegro) and 2 autonomous provinces: Kosovo and Vojvodina Republic of Serbia divided into 29 districts

Source: Committee of the Regions (2005), "The New Neighbourhood Policy with Particular Reference to the Balkans", First Interim Report, February.

capable of implementing their own development policies. Accordingly, the SEE countries that already have candidate status or are well ahead in their Stabilisation and Association Process are eager to proceed with reforms at the regional level.

One of the most important efforts in that direction was the SEE Ministerial Conference on "Effective Democratic Governance at the Local and Regional Level", organised by the Council of Europe, the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe and the host Croatian Government, in Zagreb, in October 2004. During the conference the SEE Ministers responsible for Local Self-Government signed a Memorandum of Understanding, committing themselves to strengthen local democracy in co-operation with international organisations and regional initiatives.<sup>2</sup> In particular, the Zagreb Declaration adopted by all the participants in the Conference reaffirmed the importance of local democracy, underlined the importance of cross-border co-operation between local authorities, and agreed on specific criteria for local government reforms.<sup>3</sup>

The process of preparation and the follow up of the Zagreb Ministerial Conference revealed both prospects and shortcomings regarding local democracy issues in SEE. Decentralisation is still politically or ethically sensitive in many areas, such as Serbia and Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). In some cases lack of capacity, personnel, and effective structure even at central/ministry level and limited political will impede efforts toward concrete development by central governments to put local democracy high in their agenda.

The South-East European governments finalised their Work Programmes for Better Local Governance in February 2005, in close co-operation with the

Council of Europe, underlining the commitment of the central political authorities to reform and to build local capacities. Additionally, a dialogue was started between national governments, local authorities, their associations and the local communities regarding the immediate needs and the future planning of local governance. Beyond the finalisation of the Work Programmes, the challenge is to monitor and evaluate their implementation on a state-by-state basis.

One of the most important elements of the Zagreb Ministerial Conference was the implementation of dialogue between the central government and the local authorities and their associations. This was envisaged and partly achieved in the Work Programmes and strategies as finalised after a constructive dialogue with the national associations of local authorities and local agencies and organisations. In all the above-mentioned efforts, the regional Network of Association of Local Authorities of South-Eastern Europe (NALAS) played an important role.

NALAS is an ambitious Council of Europe project to bind related associations more closely and to qualify them as equal partners in the national dialogue on local democracy and decentralisation. NALAS is in transition: it was moving its secretariat from Strasbourg to the region, electing a new Executive Director, and organising its first Assembly in May 2005. Beyond its contribution prior to and during the Ministerial Conference, NALAS was in the process of identifying its immediate priorities and main partners, as well as enhancing co-operation and information exchange with municipalities and civil society.<sup>4</sup>

The improvement and implementation of reforms in local democracy legislation is a challenge for both the international organisations and the South-East European countries. Reforms are focusing on local good governance, capacity building, raising awareness of decentralisation, strengthening professionalism, transparency and accountability of local administration and improvement of its services, enforcement of the dialogue between all parties concerned, development of local leadership and strategic management, and ensuring the participation of local civil society.

This involves:

- clearly defined competences and responsibilities of local authorities, avoiding overlaps, grey areas, and over-supervision by the central government, and feasibility in the light of the available resources;
- legislative reforms that will put the implementation and the consistency of the legal framework on solid ground;
- professionalisation, motivation and transparency of the appointment and performance of the local authorities' staff; creation of the framework of the relations between central and local government;

- qualification of local authorities and their associations as equal partners in an institutionalised dialogue with all parties concerned, in particular the central government;
- enhancement of the local democracy culture of the local leaders, based on accountability, transparency, delivery on promises and services to the public, encouragement and active participation of local communities and social groups in local affairs;
- focus on everyday problems of local people and communities and strategy planning for local economic development, social cohesion and inclusiveness in close co-operation with the central government, through closely-co-ordinated mechanisms and agencies;
- exchange of information, life-long staff training on public administration, know-how and technology, productive use of international programmes, accessible to all members of the community;
- agreement on core guidelines that are well-planned and implemented by all parties concerned in every South-East European country, in close co-operation with the international community.

A very positive development is that the international community has shown an increasing interest in local democracy in South-Eastern Europe. The European Union, through EuropeAid, the Enlargement Directorate and the European Commission's regional offices, supports specific projects on local democracy in SEE. In addition the CoE-Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (CLRA) continues to work closely with local elected representatives. The World Bank and the OSCE Missions have underlined the importance of fostering local democracy. Furthermore, the Committee of the Regions of the European Union is becoming involved in the region for the first time. Together, the CoE-Congress of Local and Regional Authorities and the Stability Pact organised a conference on Local and Regional Authorities in the Western Balkans, in Pristina, in summer 2005, in an effort to transfer the experience of regional authorities of the EU member states to the region.<sup>5</sup>

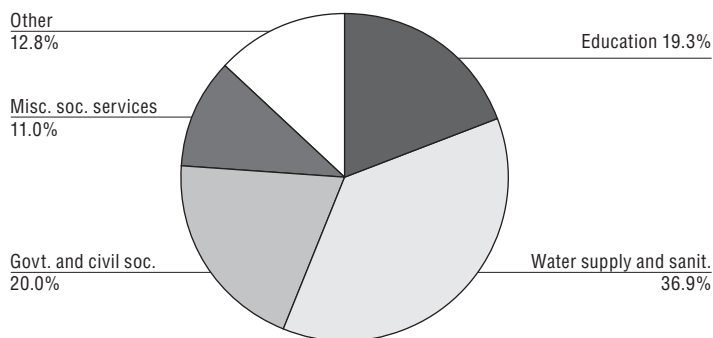
The Stability Pact felt that the interest from the donor community has to be mapped out to increase effective co-ordination. Accordingly, the Open Society Institute under the auspices of OECD/DAC and the Stability Pact undertook the Donor Assistance Mapping Exercise, to create and test donors' database on local democracy projects for the South East European beneficiary countries. Here are the major findings of the study:

- Specific local government assistance amounts to 10-15% of the total amount of donor assistance to Stability Pact countries.
- The largest receivers of local governmental assistance in the region are Albania and Serbia and Montenegro with 31% and 22% of all local

governmental assistance, respectively. Croatia, FYROM, Romania, and Moldova follow, each accounting for between 6 and 13% of all local governmental assistance.

- 20 donor countries were active in funding local governmental assistance projects in the region (the European Commission, International Financial Institutions (entities, such as the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and the World Bank/International Development Association are counted as separate “donor countries”). There is a considerable concentration among donors: more than two thirds of assistance funds were provided by four major donors: Germany, Greece, the European Commission, and IDA.
- More than one third of local government-related assistance supported water supply and sanitation projects. One fifth of aid funds was spent on both education and government/civil society projects. The remaining one-fourth was spent on other fields such as health and population programmes (Figure 6.1).<sup>6</sup>

Figure 6.1. **Fields of local governmental assistance in Stability Pact beneficiary countries (2003)**



## Capacity building and fiscal decentralisation

The decentralisation process and the effectiveness of local and regional authorities are closely connected to the authorities' operational and structural capacities. In many cases in South Eastern Europe reforms affecting local self-governance are not implemented due to lack of resources and staff. On the other hand, the issues of capacity building and the process of fiscal decentralisation are political issues, dependent on political choices made by the central government. In the countries of the region the budget for local expenditures as a percentage of the GDP typically ranges from 5.6% to 8.5%, except in FYROM, which reached only 1.8% of GDP, in 2003. For comparison, in

Table 6.2. **Local and general government budgets**

	Government expenditures in percentage of GDP	Local expenditures in percentage of GDP (%)	Local expenditures in percentage of general government expenditures (%)
Albania	27	6.7	23
Bulgaria	38	6.5	16
Croatia	49	7.5	15
FYROM	27	1.8	7
Moldova	25	7.2	29
Montenegro	42	5.8	14
Romania	32	8.5	25
Serbia	25	5.6	25

EU member states the similar budget is from 10% to 30%, with the highest rate in Scandinavia.

Despite the low percentage of local expenditure, a considerable increase has taken place since 2000 and related legislation has been adopted. The issue of implementation of legislation on decentralisation remains central, and in many cases a certain under-funding of local services is caused by general budget restraint and fiscal difficulties at the central level.

Municipal property and taxation issues, budgetary separation, transparency and reassurance about fiscal allocations are matters that have to be dealt and defined clearly. In many cases, however, municipalities have no right to hold property and do not enjoy discretion in expenditure despite recent reforms in the relevant legislation.

Furthermore, fiscal issues impinge on capacity building: the need to enhance local leadership, to improvise services on a professional and sustainable basis, to train the staff of local authorities and their associations. The latter are matters that are closely connected to the political choices and willingness of the central government gradually to build the necessary capacity for effective local governance. This in turn is connected with the realisation of the responsibilities of the local authorities and their associations to provide services, to represent the needs of the community, to be accountable to their citizens, and to be transparent in their everyday functioning.

In many cases, limited assignment of resources by central to local governments and the limited power or ability of local authorities to raise their own revenues and incomes make them less independent and self-sustainable. Furthermore, significant disparities in development potential and governmental support to regions and municipalities within one state can cause dangerous imbalances, with severe socio-economic and political consequences, ranging from internal migration and urbanisation, through



economic stagnation of peripheral and border areas to loosening of social cohesion and inter-ethnic and intra-regional competition.

How funds from the central governments are allocated to local authorities has to be legislatively defined and scientifically planned according to the developmental needs of the country's areas and sectors. It must also be institutionally guaranteed and politically supported on a long-term basis. It is rather difficult to speak for effective local governance, when resources are allocated and staff is hired or fired depending on which political party they are members of.

Assuming that the legislative framework has been defined and that capacity has been strengthened, good leadership and management are still needed to promote the effectiveness of local authorities and the active involvement of the local community in order to strengthen the process of institution building and democratisation.

The challenges in strengthening local and regional authorities and the decentralisation process are that legislation reform, political will, capacity building, fiscal decentralisation, training and services, have all to be connected and decided in common through a constructive dialogue between the central and local authorities, civil society and the private sector.

Capacity building and training programmes for local authorities and civil society are the cornerstone of any future development towards strengthened, reliable, participative and effective local governance. It is encouraging, that international organisations have realised this and are focusing more effectively on these aspects.

## **Promoting participative democracy at the local level**

Training of local authorities and civil society is closely linked with participative local democracy. Training programmes are mechanisms that encourage participation of the local community and specific social groups. There is therefore need for a National Training Strategy based on a comprehensive Training Needs Analysis in collaboration with all major stakeholders.<sup>7</sup>

Up to now training programmes have been rather sporadic, proposed and concluded by international agencies and NGOs, and focused on local politicians and leaders. The results of these programmes are limited, since there is no long-term planning. The capacity and the effectiveness of local public administration are rarely improved, and in most cases, training excludes the staff and interested individuals coming from the community.

A local administration and leadership that increases its capacity and improves its performance, attracts the interest of its citizens and of

professional staff. Increased training capacity means more scope for the community to participate actively and to contribute and, from this vantage point, to be in constant dialogue, to demand and to control, thus assembling all the elements of a participative and sound democracy.

Regarding local democracy issues, it is noteworthy that civil society is rather passive, even in SEE countries in which local NGOs have a very good record.<sup>8</sup> This indicates that the members of the community consider local affairs as the task and the privilege of local leaders. These in turn tend to focus their efforts on strengthening their position *vis-à-vis* the central government, sidelining the participation of the local community and the dialogue with it. This fact has a clear bearing on the training of local leaders and their understanding of participative democracy and inclusive local institutions.

Furthermore, the local authorities can play a leading role in sensitive issues, especially in post-conflict areas. Inter-ethnic relations, co-existence among different ethnic and religious groups, and the return of refugees and internal displaced persons to local communities are heavily dependent on the policy of local authorities. To this end, civil education, programmes for the youth, women and disabled people and active participation of local NGOs are methods that should be strongly encouraged.

The local civil society and the private sector should work in synergy with the local authorities for education, economic development, social cohesion, and local good governance. Only the local community's participation can make local development sustainable, enforce transparency and accountability, and make information accessible to everybody, minimising the dangers of corruption. Corruption can arise easily when the process of decentralisation transfers and powers to the local authorities, unless transparent structures, civil education and training have previously been put in place.

Beyond certain limitations of local capacities and training, the main problem regarding the limited participation of citizens' organisations in local affairs is the mentality and political culture which dictates that "citizens' participation ends with the elections" and that "decision-making process open to citizens is forced by international actors".<sup>9</sup> Better information, civil rights education, "training for trainers" programmes, public hearings, citizens advisory groups, local community councils are all measures that should be supported and gradually implemented.

Citizens' participation in this process is valuable and necessary. Lack of information and co-operation with the local civil society and social groups jeopardise local democratisation and the development process. Responsibility lies with national and local governments to initiate programmes which focus on people facing discrimination and possible marginalisation. Non-governmental organisations and Local Democracy Agencies should be more

active partners in projects that promote citizens' access, social cohesion, and equitable economic sustainable development.

### **Linking local democracy and cross-border co-operation**

Despite the large number of cross-border projects, mainly funded by international organisations and donors, the strategic guidance and capacity which could promote substantial and sustainable cross-border co-operation in South-Eastern Europe is lacking. The Thessaloniki Declaration pointed out that "inter-regional co-operation constitutes an essential element of the Stabilisation and Association Process".<sup>10</sup> In this framework, cross-border co-operation (CBC) is an important tool for the integration of the countries of the region

Three elements are necessary for successful strengthening of cross-border co-operation:

- an appropriate legislative framework on local governance,
- local administration reform and capacity building, and
- political support of the central government.

Cross-border co-operation has worked well where immediate basic common problems were tackled, such as economic stagnation, unemployment, natural disasters, or promotion of the participation of all social and ethnic groups. CBC networks have remained self-sustained when they were cost effective and planned on a long-term developmental basis.

As national governments of the region clearly prefer to think twice about cross-border co-operation within the region ("internal CBC"), EU accession is the guiding force of cross-border co-operation, especially with EU member-states ("external CBC"). The latter is politically supported by the South-East European governments and financially backed by the European Commission. By contrast, "internal CBC" is rather new and international organisations lack the necessary experience so that broader and effective synergies are needed.

Until the beginning of 2003, as far as cross-border co-operation is concerned, the European Commission focused on integrated border management issues, dealing with the fight against organised crime, illegal migration, traffic in human beings, and promotion of police co-operation. There has since been a broader approach to trans-frontier co-operation by the European Commission, including civil society, private sector, and local authorities in its strategy.

The considerable increase in the budget available for cross-border co-operation projects in the EU Regional Multi-annual Indicative Programme (MIP) for 2005-2006, which allocates 33 to 39 million euros, is a positive signal.<sup>11</sup> In July 2004, the European Commission approved an increase of 15 million euros in the 2004 allocation, in order to finance the New Neighbourhood Instrument

programme. In the MIP objectives and expected results, co-operation among regions and municipalities, the participation of civil society, co-operation amongst local communities and the development of capacity at local and regional level have a central position.<sup>12</sup> Every year, the European Commission allocates 15 million euros for “external CBC” (Neighbourhood Programmes) and 3 million euros for “internal CBC” (CARDS CBC). It is important that both types of CBC function with the same objectives and using the same mechanisms, guidelines and methodology, given that in the future this distinction will not exist, since all the countries of the region will be EU member-states.

Furthermore, the recent EU enlargement gives the region greater possibilities to participate in INTERREG and CBC Phare programmes within the framework of the EC Neighbourhood Programmes. Clearly, South-East European local and regional actors need more information on how to access EU funding.

At the same time, EU enlargement challenges the international community to be flexible and adaptable, since the EU and the Schengen borders change rather often. Only with clearly defined objectives and goals, long-term planning and effective mechanisms can cross-border co-operation function in a positive and structural way to contribute to integration in Europe of the countries of the region, simultaneously reinforcing trans-frontier co-operation with the EU member states at large.

Changed borders also make the visa regime a central issue. Certain regulations exist and visa liberalisation cannot be expected in the near future. On the other hand, visa facilitation and new special regulations are needed and the European Commission is ready to submit a specific proposal to the European Council soon. In this framework, mobility programmes for specific social groups, such as students, young people, women, scientists have to be encouraged.

In addition, existing cross-border co-operation frameworks can be examined for a “best practices and lessons learned” approach. Amongst them, several Euro regions remain valuable networks, despite certain shortcomings. Initiatives within the framework of the Ohrid-Prespa and the Southern Adriatic Euro region, the Presevo-Kumanovo-Gjilan-Trgoviste (PKGT) micro-region, and the recent establishment of the Adriatic/Ionian Euro region by the CoE-Congress of Local and Regional Authorities are encouraging examples. On the other hand, the effectiveness of cross-border frameworks and projects is still questioned. What is needed is a methodological framework which will guarantee training, long-term planning, evaluation and follow up of the CBC initiatives.

The challenge is to create self-sustainable CBC networks based on a long-term plan. How can we provide direct results that are visible in peoples’ everyday life? How do we deal with immediate and urgent problems, such as

unemployment, lack of services and access to information? It is noticeable that when CBC networks of local authorities are created only for political reasons, without being functional and without targeting the immediate needs of their citizens, they have proved to be “empty balloons” for domestic political consumption. By contrast, micro-projects or micro-regions with the active participation of the civil society and with specific targets, well-structured in working groups addressing themes that are directly linked to citizens’ everyday problems, under the leadership of local authorities, which are keen to co-operate even at inter-ethnic level, are the guiding examples for future initiatives. A balance between political incentives and the functionality of projects is needed to optimise the results of CBC networks.

In many cases, local communities in border areas suffer from a shortage of professional staff to deal with available international programmes and funds. The lack of know-how and of appropriate technological equipment is an additional problem. Few local and international organisations and local development agencies are presently active in this field; they ought to be supported and their work intensified. Further, a legal framework on cross-border co-operation does not exist or is unclear and cross-border initiatives still work under the full political control of central government, very often with inadequate funds. A noteworthy feature illustrating how unclear political environment affects trans-frontier co-operation is that important international treaties and conventions have not yet been ratified by all members of the international community.<sup>13</sup>

In order to strengthen cross-border co-operation, capacity building at local and regional level and the participation of members of the local communities in activities and programmes are all needed. In the opposite direction the existence of cross border programmes and networks could help the building of local capacity and promote local good governance.

Local authorities, civil society and local communities have to be informed about and actively participate in national and international programmes that promote local capacity building, local administrative reforms and cross-border co-operation.

## Conclusion

Building the capacity of local authorities and promoting the participation of local communities are policies that promote democracy and stability at all levels of the social and political environment in every country, including South-Eastern Europe. The decentralisation process is an essential element of democracy only if it is participative and inclusive. Decentralisation without previous or simultaneous capacity building and training of local authorities, local administration staff, and civil society will stagnate; it will not promote

functional democracy. Strong local authorities not accountable to the local communities could hinder rather than foster sustainable progress in the field of social and ethnic differences and civil rights.

The effort to build participative and effective local authorities and local good governance is a long-term process, which has not been completed even within the European Union.

The challenges are numerous. We have to:

- understand local democracy,
- clearly define the assignment of competences and resources,
- implement legislative reforms,
- create professional structures,
- define the relationship between state authorities and local government,
- strengthen the institutional dialogue,
- secure transparency and accountability,
- secure local economic, social and environmental development,
- promote leadership and strategic management,
- provide services and training,
- develop a political culture of community participation, and
- create structures and networks for cross-border and inter-ethnic co-operation.

In other words, our task is to build local democratic institutions which will be in the service of their own citizens. They should continue to function effectively and inclusively, as a beacon of a “democratic institutional memory” for the coming generations, regardless of the political changes or administrative reforms that the future may bring.

## Notes

1. The author of this chapter would like to thank Amb. J.D. Bieler (Stability Pact), Mr. M. Peretti (European Commission), Mr. A. Zardi (Council of Europe), and Mr. A. Ionescu (OSI) for their co-operation on local democracy issues.
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3. Final Declaration, SEE Ministerial Conference on “Effective Democratic Governance at the Local and Regional Level”, Zagreb, 26 October 2004.
4. See NALAS Strategic Plan 2004-2007, Strasbourg, October 2003, and NALAS Declaration, SEE Ministerial Conference on “Effective Democratic Governance at the Local and Regional Level”, Zagreb, 26 October 2004.

5. Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, Working Table I, Local Democracy / Cross-Border Co-operation (LODE/CBC) Task Force Reports, April 2004 and April 2005.
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7. Council of Europe (26 October 2004), The Challenges and Objectives for the Development of Effective Democratic Local Government, SEE Ministerial Conference on "Effective Democratic Governance at the Local and Regional Level", Zagreb, p. 9.
8. S. Sofianski, « Les enjeux de la démocratie locale en Europe du Sud-est », Council of Europe, Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, CG (11)7 Part II, 11th Plenary Session, 28 April 2004.
9. The Association of Local Democracy Agencies (ALDA), Report to the SEE Ministerial Conference on "Effective Democratic Governance at the Local and Regional Level", Zagreb, 26 October 2004, p. 4.
10. Thessaloniki Declaration for the Western Balkans, June 2003, Porto Carras-Halkidiki/Greece.
11. "MIP aim is to support activities under the 10 Neighbourhood Programmes launched in 2004 and the 6 CARDS CBC programmes to be launched in 2005". European Commission paper on "Border Region co-operation in the Western Balkans", Stability Pact LODE/CBC Task force Meeting, April 2005, p. 4.
12. CARDS – EU Regional Multi-annual Indicative Programme (MIP) for 2005-2006, pp. 31-35.
13. For example the Madrid Outline Convention on Trans-frontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities and Authorities, Madrid, 21 May 1980.





## ANNEX

### *About the Authors*

**David J.A. Douglas** is Professor of Rural Planning and Development in the School of Environmental Design and Rural Development, University of Guelph, Canada. In 1985 he was Director of the University School of Rural Planning and Development, after ten years in management consulting and five years in regional development policy and planning, Province of Ontario. He conducts his research, teaching and practice in Canada and Europe, and in other international contexts (e.g., China, Iran, Indonesia, Pakistan, Japan). His main expertise is in rural and smaller community development, governance, local government, and regional economic development policy and planning.

**Irena Đokić** is an economist specialised in urban management. She works in a multi-disciplinary team in the Spatial Economics Department at the Institute of Economics, Zagreb. Her research covers local and regional development in Croatia, management and development of units of local and regional government, planning and programming at national, regional and local level and institutional capacity building. In the last few years her research has focused on the problem of urban brown fields.

**Sylvain Giguère** is Deputy Head of Local Economic and Employment Development (LEED) at the OECD. As part of his responsibilities he leads a multi-disciplinary work programme on employment and governance which seeks to improve policies and practices on labour markets, skills, migration and economic development in the context of globalisation and policy interdependence. Sylvain co-ordinates LEED's programme of work, oversees the LEED Directing Committee sessions, and heads the OECD Forum on Partnerships and Local Governance. He studied economics at UQAM and Queens' University in Canada and holds a PhD (econ.) from Université Paris 1 (Sorbonne).

**Vladan Jeremić** is the Director of the Regional Development Agency of Eastern Serbia (RDA-ES). RDA-ES has been established jointly by six municipalities, the business sector and civil society. Mr. Jeremic currently

manages activities related to creating, supporting and encouraging regional development and creation of a stimulating business environment in Eastern Serbia. His main expertise is in cross-sector partnerships, regional development and strategic planning. Earlier he worked with the European Agency for Reconstruction at OSCE and one of Serbia's main regional NGOs.

**Dubravka Jurlina Alibegović** has worked at the Institute of Economics, Zagreb, since 1987 where she is Head of the Public Sector Department. She is team leader in several research projects and studies regarding budgeting and economic development at regional and local level, intergovernmental fiscal relations, local public finance, infrastructure financing, and financing of science and education. During 2000-2002 she worked in the Ministry of Science and Technology as a Deputy Minister responsible for management, budgeting and co-ordination of activities in preparing the Strategy of Science Development of Croatia.

**Irina Kolesnikova** is Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Economics of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus (NASB) since 1997. She is also with the Institute of Social and Economic Development in Minsk, as well as Associate Professor at the Belarusian Economic State University. She is in charge of research and development activities, particularly in the area of regional development, local finance, fiscal relations, entrepreneurship and enterprise restructuring. She is author of more than 60 publications.

**Haralambos Kondonis** is a Senior Research Fellow at the South-East European Research Centre of Sheffield University, a Research Fellow at the Greek Diplomatic Academy, a Research Associate at ELIAMEP in Athens, member of the IASFM in The Hague and an Expert-Counsellor at the Greek MFA. His main expertise is in regional and cross-border co-operation and democratisation processes. He has co-operated with OSCE/ODIHR, the Stability Pact for SEE, the European Commission and the European Council. He has published academic articles in journals in Canada, Greece, Italy, Serbia, the UK and the US and has studied International Relations (LSE), European Politics (Reading), and Political Science (Athens).

**Zdenka Kovač** is currently a Senior Lecturer and researcher of social entrepreneurship at GEA College of Entrepreneurship, Slovenia and a DIFID-London School of Economics expert on social governance in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In the past she has been in charge of designing employment programmes at local and national level, a Director of the Small Business Development Centre (SBDC), State Secretary for Employment and Minister for Regional Development and Structural Policies of the Republic of Slovenia. She has co-authored several books and articles on issues of regional development, entrepreneurship, public policy and local governance.

**Kalyan Pandey** has worked at the UNDP office in Albania since 2002 where he manages the Local Governance Cluster Programme, which includes

several sub-projects related to local governance and development. He joined the UNDP in 1994, first at the Nepal office and then in Kyrgyzstan, where, as Chief Technical Advisor and Programme Manager he managed several programmes on local governance, decentralisation and local development. Prior to joining the UNDP, he worked as Decentralised Planning Training Co-ordinator at a semi-government institute in Nepal for 18 years and also worked as short term training specialist with the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) in Rome and the Asian Development Bank, and provided consultancy services in China, Myanmar and Nepal.

**Ivana Rašić Bakarić** joined the Institute of Economics, Zagreb in 2001 where she works as a Research Assistant in the Department for Spatial Economics. She earned her Masters degree with a thesis in operational research methods at the Graduate School of Economics and Business, University of Zagreb, in 2005, where she also gained her Bachelors degree in 2000. Her specialisation is mainly in econometrics in the field of regional and urban economics. She worked during 2000-2001 in a private company, Creditreform d.o.o. in Zagreb, specialised in creditworthiness assessments. In addition, she occupied a position in KPMG Croatia as project assistant on the establishment of the central state treasury and the introduction of the SAP programme at the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Croatia.

**Željko Šević** is Professor of Accounting, Finance and Public Policy, and Director of Research, Outreach & European Affairs, in the University of Greenwich Business School in London. His principal expertise is in public sector accounting and finance, public policy and comparative public administration, and strategic management accounting. He has also held a number of visiting academic/research positions in Australia, Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Japan, Poland, Slovenia, Ukraine and the US, and has gained professional experience in both public and private sectors, at a senior level, before becoming a full-time academic in the mid-1990s. Mr. Šević holds terminal degrees in law and financial economics and also has accounting professional qualifications.

**Jelena Šišinački** holds a Research Associate position within the Department of Spatial Economics at the Institute of Economics, Zagreb, which she joined in 1995. She is author of numerous studies and articles in the field of transport infrastructure, regional development, local administration and self-government, and works frequently as a consultant in various local and regional development projects. She earned her doctoral degree on “The Costs and Benefits of Road Infrastructure” at the Graduate School of Economics and Business, University of Zagreb in 2005, where she also gained her Masters degree in 1999 and Bachelors degree in 1994.

**David Smallbone** is Professor of Entrepreneurship and Small Business in the Small Business Research Centre at Kingston University, United Kingdom. As well

as undertaking numerous SME-related projects in various mature market economies, Mr. Smallbone has been involved in studies of entrepreneurship in transition economies, including Poland, Bulgaria, the Baltic States, the Russian Federation, Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Uzbekistan and China. His fields of expertise are mainly entrepreneurship, public policy and transition economies.

**Nenad Starc** is a Senior Research Fellow in the Institute of Economics, Zagreb where he holds the position of Head of the Regional Economics Department. His main interests are local development, and in particular the methodology of preparing programmes for local self-government units; sustainable development, on which theme he teaches at Zagreb University; and island development. Mr. Starc has recently been the main author of the Croatian Island Development Programme.

**Desislava Stoilova** joined the Faculty of Economics at the Southwest University, Bulgaria after her graduation in 2000 as an assistant professor in Finance. In 2006 she obtained a PhD with a thesis in the field of local finance. Now she teaches Public Finance and conducts research activities in the area of fiscal decentralisation, intergovernmental fiscal relations and local financial management. She is author of more than 20 publications primarily intended to promote the application of some effective private sector tools for financial management in the public sector.

**Paul Stubbs** is a sociologist born in the United Kingdom currently Senior Research Fellow in the Institute of Economics, Zagreb where he is part of a multi-disciplinary team researching local and regional development in Croatia. He has worked as a consultant on social policy issues for UNICEF, UNDP, DFID, and Save the Children. His latest book, co-edited with Bob Deacon, on *Social Policy and International Interventions in South East Europe*, was published in November 2007 by Edward Elgar. His fields of expertise include social policy, social exclusion, child care reform, civil society development, corporate social responsibility, and computer mediated activism.

**Marijana Sumpor** works as a Research Associate in the Department of Spatial Economics at the Institute of Economics, in Zagreb since 2001. Besides her research activities she is actively involved in consultancy activities as well as various forms of capacity building. During 1995-1998 she worked at the Department for Macroeconomic Analyses and Forecasts in the Ministry of Finance, Republic of Croatia; and from 1998 to 2000 in the Risk Management Department at BNP-Dresdner Bank Croatia. With the thesis entitled "Co-ordination of development policies towards an integrative regional development policy" she earned a PhD in economics from the University of Split in 2005. She gained her Masters degree in 1999 and her Bachelors degree in 1995 at the Graduate School of Economics and Business, University of Zagreb.

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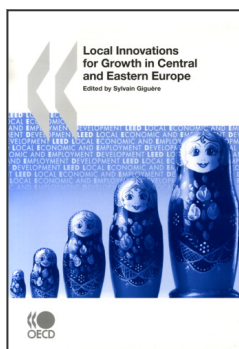
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